



TWO OFFICES

Monday-Friday
8 a.m.-5 p.m.

Piqua

344 West U.S. Route 36
Piqua, Ohio 45356

937-773-2523 or
1-800-762-0997

Urbana

767 Three Mile Road
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Visit our Web site

www.pioneerec.com

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Country Nut Hut

By Stacey Grieshop

The story of the Country Nut Hut began as owner Bonnie Rice started selling English walnuts in 1974. People would drive by her home and stop to purchase walnuts. Bonnie soon realized how much she enjoyed interacting with and helping people.



She then decided to open a small store offering locally made items, which continued to expand.

"I became committed to providing quality products at the lowest possible prices," Rice said.



Recently, I visited the Country Nut Hut, located at 4639 Addison-Carlisle Road, and was warmly greeted by Bonnie and her daughter, Leigh Anne. As I walked into the store, my eyes quickly noticed the variety and the organization of everything. This specialty store is filled with nuts, cheeses, candies, dried fruits, Amish furniture,

Polish pottery and baking utensils, as well as many other items. You even can buy 100 percent natural peanut butter as they make it while you wait. There are more than 15 varieties of Pearl Valley cheeses from the biggest seller Colby to yogurt-based cheeses. They also specialize in gift baskets for the holidays and are qualified dealers of Mangosteen Juice and Conklin products.

The Country Nut Hut has something for everyone and the prices are very competitive. I appreciated the friendliness of both women and know I'll visit their store again. It was very clear how much they enjoy what they do as they smile often and are very grateful to those who support their business.



Country Nut Hut
4639 Addison Carlisle Road
937-845-9849
Hours: Tuesday -Saturday 11 a.m.-5 p.m.



More members to see a refund in 2008

Capital credit checks to be issued in November

Earlier this year, the Pioneer Board of Trustees approved changes to the cooperative's capital credit retirement method. One of the results will be that many more current Pioneer members will receive a refund this fall.

Patronage capital is a requirement of the cooperative business model. Members contribute capital to Pioneer as they pay their bills each month. The amount taken in above and beyond what it actually costs to provide electric service becomes the company's margin. A member's allocation of the margin is based upon his or her electric use or patronage during the year. The allocated patronage margin is called capital credits.



Margins are important to a not-for-profit cooperative because they provide equity for borrowing. They also are applied to the principal portion of our debt service, and they are invested in system improvements and expansion to ensure high-quality service. Margins also give us the financial flexibility to deal with the unexpected, such as wind or ice storms.

Capital credits may be refunded or retired after a period of time. General retirements have been made to former and present Pioneer members since 1981. The methodology used has always been "first-in, first-out" (FIFO), meaning the first or oldest patronage allocated was the first refunded to members. Some cooperatives retire capital credits using the "last-in, first-out" (LIFO) method where the newest credits are retired first. Still others use a hybrid or some combination of these two methods. This year retirements at Pioneer will be made using one of these hybrid methods. The retirement will include some capital credits allocated in 1989, and some allocated in 2007. If a member was using electricity from Pioneer in both of those years, their retirement will come from both years. If they were on the lines only during one of those years, their retirement will come only from the patronage allocated to them that year.

The Board of Trustees establishes the financial goals of the cooperative. In regards to capital credits, the Board works from a philosophy which holds member equity in Pioneer between 50 and 60 percent. Board members want to see retirements made to members every year, when possible, and they want to slowly increase the amount of the retirement as it is financially feasible to do so. The Board also wants capital credits to assist in communicating and promoting the Cooperative Principles to our members and the public. Thus, the more members who actually see capital credit retirements, the greater number of people who experience this significant difference between a cooperative and an investor-owned utility. The retirement method the Board has approved is fair, will increase the number of members getting a retirement and will have a minimal impact on long-term members already accustomed to receiving a refund based on the former FIFO method.



Using our traditional method of capital credit retirement, approximately 9,400 current and former members would receive a refund. Under the new method, the number will be closer to 17,000. Individual retirements of \$25 or more will be issued as a check, while those less than \$25 will be applied to the November or December electric bill, depending on your billing cycle. The total general retirement amount will be approximately \$1.6 million this year. Pioneer has refunded more than \$19 million to date.

Make a difference

America's electric cooperatives are facing a huge energy challenge: meeting the nation's growing appetite for energy; reducing emissions of greenhouse gases and keeping electric bills affordable.

The time has come for us to ask some tough questions and get some real answers about what our officials and newly elected representatives are doing to help us meet the growing demand for electricity while addressing climate change goals.

You can make a difference by starting a conversation with your elected officials about reliable, affordable and environmentally responsible electric power.

"Never underestimate the power of personal contact with policymakers and newly elected members of Congress," says Glenn English, chief spokesman for the nation's electric cooperatives as head of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

Take time to talk to your representatives about our energy future and what they are doing to help us keep the lights on and electric bills affordable. Attend rallies and town-hall meetings when members of Congress visit.

The major questions to ask elected officials are:

Experts say that our nation's growing electricity needs soon will go well beyond what renewables, conservation and efficiency can provide. **What is your plan to make sure we have the electricity we'll need in the future?**

Our country faces a crisis as electricity use increases faster than available supply. I believe that by unleashing American ingenuity we can solve this problem. **What are you doing to speed the development of new technology that will allow me to have the electric power I need while meeting national climate policy goals?**

Balancing electricity needs and environmental goals will be difficult. **How much is all this going to increase my electric bill and what will you do to make it affordable?**

In addition to personal contact, letters make a difference, too, according to English. "In this electronic age, it's easy to stay in touch," he notes. "Electric co-op consumers can lead the way in discussing energy issues by going to www.ourenergy.coop, and asking those critical questions."



Pioneer Electric will be closed Thursday, November 27 and Friday, November 28 to allow our employees to give thanks for this great country we live in. We'll be back to serve you on Monday, Dec. 1.



We won't ask you to vote a certain way on November 4, but we do ask you to vote.

A reminder from Pioneer Electric

Pioneer Programs

Check out what your local co-op has to offer!

CFL EXCHANGE

Want to save money on energy costs? We'll help you get started with our CFL Exchange Program. Just bring in the coupon that you received in the mail along with three incandescent bulbs to receive three energy efficient CFL bulbs, for FREE! Contact Meghan McGuire at mmcguire@pioneerrec.com

Cool Returns[®]

Want to help your co-op manage its energy costs? By allowing us to cycle the compressor of your central air conditioning unit or heat pump during our peak demands, you are helping to control our future costs of purchasing power. And, you'll receive a \$100 bill credit! Contact Ted Riethman at triethman@pioneerrec.com

CO-OP CONNECTIONS[®]

Looking for ways to support your local economy, receive discounts from local businesses and receive discounts on prescriptions? Learn more about our FREE discount program at www.connections.coop, stop into one of our offices for local business listings, or contact Stacey Grieshop at sgrieshop@pioneerrec.com

COPA[®]

Want to support political candidates who will look out for your cooperative? Co-op Owners for Political Action (COPA) was organized to support only the political candidates who will speak for and protect the interests of rural electric consumers and their cooperative electrical systems. Contact Nanci McMaken at nmcmaken@pioneerrec.com

ENERGY ADVISOR

Need advice on how to manage your energy costs? Planning to retrofit your home to be more energy efficient? Need the names of local insulation contractors? Contact Meghan McGuire (mmcguire@pioneerrec.com) to schedule a blower door test and/or infrared camera inspection, free of charge for Pioneer members.

ENVIROWATTS[®]

Interested in supporting further development of utility scale renewable energy in Ohio? Purchasing a 100 kilowatt-hour block of electricity produced from renewable energy sources has the effect of not driving your car for three months, for only \$2/mo. Contact Meghan McGuire at mmcguire@pioneerrec.com

GEOTHERMAL

Considering switching fuels to heat your home? Did you know that for every \$1 you pay in electricity to run a geothermal heat pump, you will receive \$3-\$4 in heating/cooling? Need local contractors? If you make the switch to geo, we can help guide your way. Contact Ted Riethman at triethman@pioneerrec.com

HOME CONSTRUCTION SEMINAR

Want to learn how to build an energy-efficient home or retro-fit an existing home? Attend our one-day seminar held every spring. Learn from industry professionals how to invest your money in home improvements that will pay for themselves with energy savings. Contact Ted Riethman at triethman@pioneerrec.com

OUR ENERGY, OUR FUTURE

Concerned with the future of energy costs in our nation? Visit www.ourenergy.coop and find talking points to start a dialogue with your elected officials about capacity, technology and affordability within the electric industry. For further questions, contact Nancy Hatcher at nhatcher@pioneerrec.com

PIONEER CONNECT

Want to save money on postage? You now can pay your Pioneer Electric Cooperative bill on the Internet with a check, credit or debit card. Go online to our Web site www.pioneerrec.com to start paying online today.

TOUCHSTONE ENERGY HOMESM

Planning to build a new home and want to design your home for energy efficiency? We can advise you on key construction options that will help you to secure long-term energy savings. Receive an Energy Star rating, guaranteed heating and cooling for two years, and a \$1,000 rebate. Contact Ted Riethman at triethman@pioneerrec.com

YOUTH TOUR

Know of a high school sophomore or junior interested in exploring the nation's capital? Pioneer offers an all-expense-paid trip to Washington, D.C. to one or two students June 12-18. It's a chance to meet elected officials and learn about the cooperative way of doing business. Contact Nancy Hatcher nhatcher@pioneerrec.com